

**Student Election
Commission
2025-26**



Model Code of Conduct

**STUDENTS' GENERAL
ELECTIONS 2026**

Indian Institute of Technology Madras

Foreword

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) serves as a foundational framework to ensure the conduct of free, fair, transparent, and ethical elections within the IIT Madras student community. It upholds the values of integrity, inclusivity, and accountability that form the bedrock of student governance at the Institute.

This document is an updated edition of the Model Code of Conduct issued during Students' General Elections (SGE) 2025. The present edition consolidates and refines all relevant guidelines, clarifications, and procedural instructions issued by the Student Election Commission up to the commencement of SGE 2026. Every effort has been made to incorporate significant directives and best practices to make this compendium a comprehensive and practical reference for candidates, campaign teams, student bodies, and election officials.

This Model Code of Conduct is inspired by the principles underlying the Model Code of Conduct issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI), and its framework has been adapted from the ECI's MCC to suit the institutional context of IIT Madras.

For ease of reference, the full text of the Model Code of Conduct has been included within this document.

It is hoped that this edition will serve as a valuable handbook for all stakeholders involved in the Students' General Elections 2026.

Thankfully,

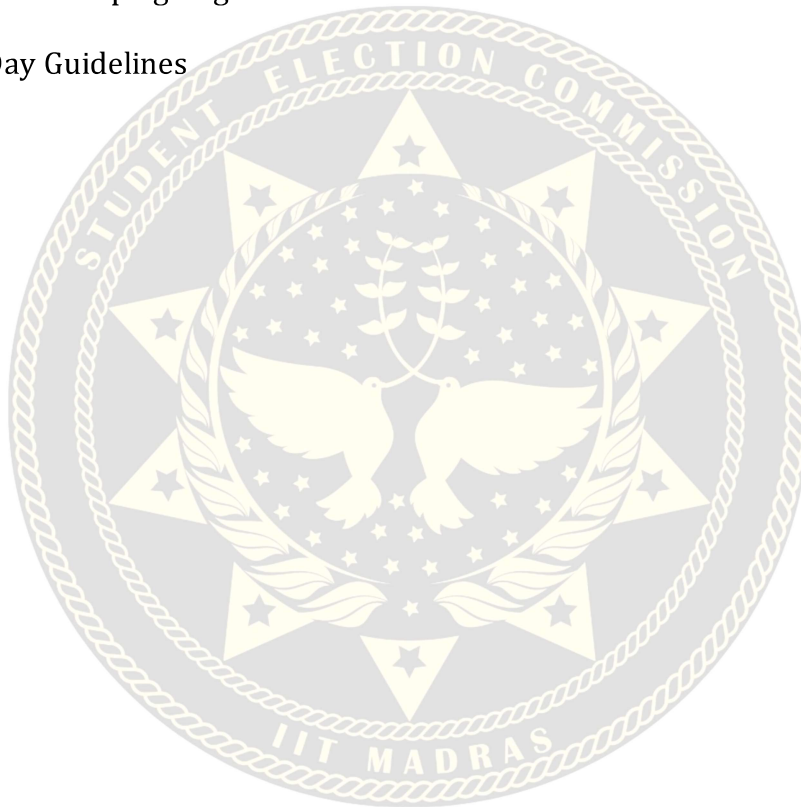
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I. General Conduct

1. All students and candidates shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Students' Constitution of IIT Madras and all election-related rules and notifications issued by the Student Election Commission (SEC).
2. No candidate or student shall engage in any activity that may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred, disharmony, or tension among groups based on caste, community, religion, language, or any other identity.
3. There shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes. Mosques, Churches, Temples or other places of worship shall not be used as a forum for election propaganda.
4. Criticism of other candidates, where made, shall be confined strictly to their policies, programmes, past record, and work related to public activities within the Institute.
5. Candidates and students shall refrain from criticism of personal matters or aspects of private life that are not connected to the public functions or activities of the Institute.
6. Negative campaigning is strictly prohibited. A candidate/campaign must not attempt to tarnish the image of the opposing/any other candidate with libelous or slanderous accusations.
7. Elected representatives shall not endorse any candidate in their official capacity, nor accompany a candidate for the purpose of canvassing votes.
8. No Student Organisation and their office bearers can endorse a candidate in any official capacity.
9. Anyone other than members of the Election Commission, or its agents, seen possessing a list of current students at the institute with the intention of manipulating or organized harvesting of votes or aiding a similar effort shall be reported to the competent Disciplinary Committee in addition to SEC's disciplinary action.

II. Campaigning Guidelines

a. Campaigning Period

1. The campaigning period starts on 05th March 2026, 05:00 PM till 15th March 2026, 10:00 PM.
2. Campaigning timings are as follows -
 - Weekdays: 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM
 - Weekends and Institute holidays: 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM
3. All sorts of campaigning is strictly limited to the campaigning period, and within the campus. Any candidate who begins campaigning prior to the start of the campaigning period and after the campaigning period will be deemed in violation of the MCC.
4. Any promotion utilizing physical /electronic /social media or any other form of public/private medium is prohibited until the start of the campaigning period or after the campaigning period.

b. Permissible Campaign Content

1. Candidates shall confine their campaigning strictly to the content formally submitted to and acknowledged by the SEC under the provisions of below Sections. No candidate shall introduce, circulate, announce, or promote any supplementary material, additional agenda points, new commitments, or policy positions beyond those officially submitted.
2. All campaign speeches, discussions, digital communication, and other forms of outreach shall remain fully consistent with the approved content.
3. Any deviation, expansion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of the submitted material shall constitute a campaign violation and may invite penalties as determined by the SEC.

Section 1: Manifesto, Feasibility Report and Statement of Purpose (In case of Legislators)

1. Every candidate shall submit a Manifesto along with a Feasibility Report and a Statement of Purpose in the case of Legislator positions, within the timeline prescribed by the SEC.
2. The submitted Manifesto / Feasibility Report / Statement of Purpose shall constitute the sole and official campaign document of the candidate.

Section 2: Posters

1. Creation of Poster for publicity/campaigning is **not mandatory** for any candidate.
2. All Non-Executive council candidates can make **ONE poster** detailing their candidacy and all Executive council candidates can make **TWO posters** detailing their candidacy.
3. Only those posters which are shared with SEC are official and can be shared on digital platforms and SEC will not publish these except for the Executive Council Posts.
4. Non-candidates and voters are prohibited from creating or distributing posters, whether on behalf of a candidate or not, except for the posters approved by SEC.
5. Distribution and display of printed copies of posters is also strictly prohibited during the campaign period.
6. Candidates should not lie or misrepresent their ideas. The poster should be reflective of the manifesto they have submitted during the regular process.
7. The Poster will be subject to fact-checking by the SEC and a violation of the above-stated principles will be considered a campaign violation subject to penalties.

Section 3: Video Manifesto (Only for Executive Council Posts)

1. Only candidates contesting for Executive Council positions are permitted to create and publish a Video Manifesto, subject to prior approval and authorization by the SEC.
2. All forms of video campaigning are strictly prohibited for Hostel Council and Department Council positions.
3. No candidate shall create, participate in, or propagate any video or visual media content related to campaigning unless expressly authorized by the SEC.
4. The use of drones or any unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for photography, videography, surveillance, or any other campaign-related purpose is strictly prohibited during the election period. Any violation of this provision shall be treated as a breach of the MCC and may invite disciplinary action.

Section 4: Mail Outreach

1. Smail outreach shall be permitted only for candidates contesting for Executive Council positions. Each Executive Council candidate may send a maximum of two (2) emails during the entire campaigning period.
2. The email content must be submitted to the Student Election Commission (SEC) for moderation in advance by writing to sec@smail.iitm.ac.in.
3. The final approved mail shall be sent only after moderation by the SEC. Moderation of all campaign-related emails shall be undertaken exclusively by the Student Election Commission.

Section 5: Social Media Content

General Guidelines

1. All candidates and students shall use only the officially approved content (as specified in Section 1, Section 2, and Section 3) for all forms of social media communication.
2. Any content published, circulated, forwarded, or otherwise disseminated on social media platforms must strictly conform to the material submitted to and approved by the SEC.

3. The use of any social media platforms or digital communication channels other than WhatsApp and Instagram for election campaigning is strictly prohibited.

WhatsApp Usage

1. All WhatsApp-related communication, including Direct Messages (DMs), Status updates, and Group circulation, shall contain only SEC-approved content for both Executive Council and Hostel/Department Council positions.

Instagram Usage

A. Executive Council Positions

1. Executive Council candidates shall be permitted to create and operate a unique social media handle/account exclusively for campaign purposes.
2. Such handles must:
 - Be approved by the SEC prior to use.
 - Follow the username format prescribed by the SEC (e.g., aas_(first name of the candidate)).
 - Be created on or after the official commencement of the campaigning period.
 - Be made public and accessible to all students at all times.
3. Executive Council candidates shall not use their personal Instagram handles for campaign purposes. (This restriction shall not apply to non-executive council candidates.)
4. Candidates are strictly prohibited from using paid promotional tools or features (including Instagram Boost or similar services) to artificially enhance reach, visibility, or engagement through monetary means.
5. These campaign handles may be used as a medium of periodic communication with the General Student Body (GSB). All campaigning guidelines shall apply to these handles, and candidates shall be fully liable for all content, speech, and engagement conducted through them.
6. Any information disseminated through these handles must be preserved and stored, and may be subject to review by the SEC.

7. All Instagram-related communication on these handles, including Direct Messages (DMs), Posts, Reels, and Stories, shall contain only SEC-approved content.

B. Hostel and Department Council Positions

1. Hostel and Department Council candidates may use their personal Instagram handles, subject to compliance with all SEC guidelines.
2. All Instagram-related communication through such personal handles including Direct Messages (DMs), Posts, and Stories shall contain only SEC-approved content.
3. Reels or any other form of video-based campaigning on Instagram are prohibited for Hostel and Department Council positions, in accordance with Section 3.

c. Mode of Campaigning

Section 1: Physical Campaigning

1. Campaigning is allowed in public spaces of the hostel zone.
2. Door-to-door campaigning is allowed, at timings set by the SEC (Campaigning Period), except if the room occupant has specifically put up a notice of Do Not Disturb (DND) on the door of their room or verbally asked not to do so.
3. Campaigning in departments is allowed only after 5:00 PM unless explicitly disallowed by the HoD.
4. Defacing of Institute property and use of PA (Public Address) systems for campaigning is strictly prohibited.
5. No gifts, in cash or kind, to the electorate are allowed. No funds from any source can be used for campaigning.

Section 2: Digital Campaigning and Social Media Policy

1. The use of social media accounts for campaigning is not mandatory for any candidate. However, if a candidate chooses to use social media for campaign-related communication, the provisions outlined in this Section and in Section 5: Social Media Content of the Permissible Campaign Content shall strictly apply.

2. The Social Media Guidelines of IIT Madras, as issued by the DoSt Office, shall form an integral part of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). Any violation of the Institute's Social Media Guidelines shall be deemed a violation of the MCC.
3. Candidates must refrain from posting, sharing, or engaging with any content that may be construed as defamatory, derogatory, slanderous, or libelous toward any other candidate.
4. Students are strictly prohibited from creating or operating social media accounts intended to mock, defame, impersonate, or otherwise target any candidate. The SEC reserves the right to initiate strict action, in coordination with Institute authorities, to identify and proceed against such individuals.
5. The candidates are discouraged from DM(ing) the students personally if the students at the receiving end don't wish to entertain their electioneering messages. Any attempt of transgressing the instructions of the student (at the receiving end of message) by the candidate shall lead to sanctions being imposed over the candidate. Candidates can send electioneering messages on WhatsApp groups until or unless the Admin of the group doesn't prohibit them from sending such messages in the group.
6. In case of Mail Outreach, The Executive Council members who are the incumbent moderators of the students' mails are instructed to not approve any sort of election related mail to the public forum during the time of Students' General Elections. All Elections related mails to be directly sent to SEC for perusal.
7. Any form of campaigning via email (including student email, mailing groups, or direct mails) requires prior approval from the Student Election Commission. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in penalties.
8. Candidates shall ensure that their supporters adhere strictly to all rules and regulations issued by the SEC regarding digital campaigning across all permitted platforms.
9. The social media guidelines shall apply uniformly to all students, irrespective of whether they are candidates or non-candidates.
10. In cases where a violation of the Social Media Policy, Model Code of Conduct, or Election Manual is committed by a non-candidate or voter, appropriate penalties shall be imposed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary framework.

III. Polling Day Guidelines

1. All students/scholars shall carry their Institute ID cards on the day of the Polling. Residents are specifically instructed to keep their ID cards with them at all times.
2. Entry to all hostels shall be restricted to respective residents. Entry of non-residents to hostels, excluding members of the SEC team, shall be reasonably restricted from 16th March 2026, 10:00 PM to 17th March 2026, 10:00 PM.
3. Except for voters, no person without a valid ID card issued by the Student Election Commission shall be permitted to enter the polling booths.
4. Any form of canvassing on the day of the polling is strictly prohibited.
5. Candidates and campaigners shall not linger around the polling booths. Any student found loitering in the vicinity of polling booths, except authorized Student Election Commission agents, may be warned twice before being reported to the authorities.
6. No candidate or campaigner shall promise or provide any incentive to voters, including facilitating vehicular travel to or from the polling station, in order to influence voting.
7. Anyone other than members of the SEC or its authorized agents found in possession of a list of current students at the Institute on polling day shall be reported to the SEC.
8. Candidates and campaigners shall cooperate fully with officers on election duty to ensure peaceful and orderly polling, and to guarantee complete freedom for voters to exercise their franchise without annoyance, obstruction, or undue influence.

Conclusion:

The Model Code of Conduct shall come into force from the date of its notification and remain in effect until the completion of the Students' General Elections 2026 process.

All candidates, campaign teams, and stakeholders are expected to strictly adhere to the provisions contained herein. Any violation of this Code shall be dealt with in accordance with the Students' Constitution and the directives of the Student Election Commission.

The Student Election Commission reserves the authority to interpret the provisions of this Code and to issue necessary clarifications in the interest of ensuring free, fair, transparent, and ethical elections.

Issued in the interest of preserving the democratic values of IIT Madras.

Issued by:

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